

Montana/Dakotas Welcomes New Associate State Director

Jerry Meredith is the BLM's new associate state director for Montana/Dakotas.

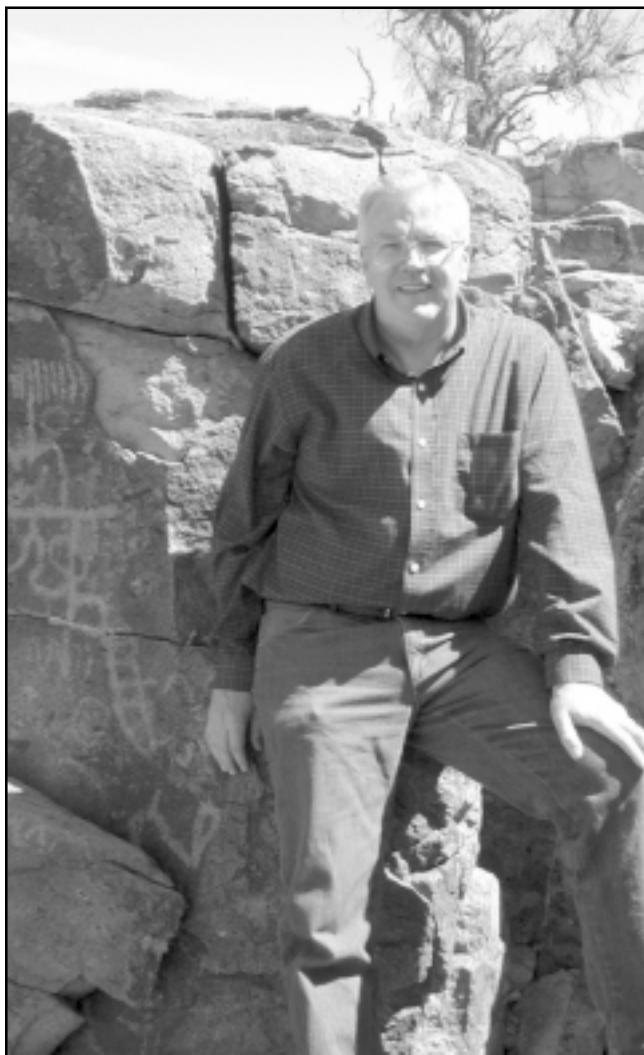
Meredith was most recently the BLM Cedar City Field Manager where he oversaw management of more than 2 million acres of public lands in southwestern Utah. He has also served as a district manager in Utah and deputy state director for External Affairs in the Utah State Office. From September 1996 to November 1999, he was the first manager of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, BLM's inaugural national monument.

Montana State Director Marty Ott noted that Meredith's skills and experience fit the position well.

"We are very pleased to have someone of Jerry's caliber joining our staff," said Ott. "The associate state director oversees the day-to-day operations of our organization, and Jerry's back-ground in land management issues and public involvement will be a real asset for our three states."

"I am truly very excited about working in Montana," Meredith said. "There are so many opportunities and challenges and I'm looking forward to getting to know the people and the issues."

Meredith is a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force Reserve. He holds a BA in Communications from Brigham Young University and did graduate studies in communications at the University of Oklahoma. He is married with four children and seven grandchildren. His hobbies



include hunting, fishing, reading and playing with his grandchildren.

Meredith's reporting date is May 4. He succeeds Roberta Moltzen, who joined the Forest Service last July as the Deputy Regional Forester for Region 8.

Our Recreation Attractions . . . Check 'em out!!



Historic Fort Meade building with Bear Butte in background (photo by Merv Coleman)

Fort Meade Recreation Area

Location

Immediately east of Sturgis, South Dakota

Description

Fort Meade was established on August 28, 1878, on the east side of Bear Butte Creek. It was the first military outpost in the Black Hills. Fort Meade Recreation Area consists of about 6,700 acres of forest and grasslands. The area is managed to protect, preserve, and enhance its cultural, historic, recreational, and wildlife values.

Directions

From Sturgis, travel 3 miles southeast on I-90 to the Black Hills National Cemetery interchange (exit 34); turn left and pass under the interstate, then follow the signs. Or, proceed one mile east of Sturgis on State Highway 34. The entrance to the recreation area is just west of the first

entrance to the Fort Meade Veterans Affairs Hospital.

Visitor Activities

Self-guided auto and walking tours, scenic drives, wildlife viewing, bird watching, bow-hunting, hiking, fishing and historic sites.

Special Features

Attractions include the historic Fort Meade Cavalry Post, the Old Fort Meade Cavalry Museum, the Fort Meade Post Cemetery, and the Centennial Trail. The Fort Meade Backcountry Byway and a portion of the 110-mile Centennial Trail cross the recreation area. The southern portion of the unit has a large population of Merriam's wild turkeys, which can be observed at all times of the year.



Fort Meade Parade Grounds. (photo by Merv Coleman)

Permits, Fees Limitations

Motor vehicle use is restricted to maintained roads. The Centennial Trail is non-motorized. Fires are allowed only in fire pits or grates.

Accessibility

Most picnic sites are wheelchair-accessible. One campsite is handicapped accessible.

Camping and Lodging

There is a nightly camping fee from May through September. Six tent campsites and a six-unit campground for horseback riders are available. Picnic facilities include 22 family picnic units and three group picnic units. The campgrounds are closed the week before, the week of, and the week after the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in August. Call BLM for more information.

Food and Supplies

Food and supplies are available in Sturgis

First Aid and Hospitals

The nearest hospital is in Sturgis

Additional Information

Hunting in most of the recreation area is archery only. Fort Meade has a mild climate with seasonal variations. Little snow accumulates during the winter months, but snowfall varies from year to year. Nearly 70 percent of the precipitation occurs in April, May, and June. Drinking water is available in the campground from May through September. The backcountry byway may be closed due to seasonal weather conditions. About a third of the recreation area is on the National Register of Historic Places.

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www.mt.blm.gov/sdfo/pages/ftmeade.html



Flags at Fort Meade Parade Grounds. (photo by Merv Coleman)

Lonesome at Arlington

Marilyn Krause and Ann Boucher

Remember “Lonesome,” the large, black mustang owned and trained by Mark Sant of the Dillon Field Office? Last summer Mark donated Lonesome to the 3rd Army Old Guard Caisson Platoon at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Lonesome is kept at Fort Myer adjacent to Arlington Cemetery and according to Jinx Fox at BLM’s Eastern State’s Office, “Lonesome is quite a hit with the army platoon.”

Since arriving at Fort Myer last August, the mustang has been training to become one of 39 horses used in funeral processions at Arlington. According to the Pentagongram, a newspaper for the Fort Myer military community, the extensive training program includes a variety of exercises and methods designed to create trust between horse and rider. The end result is a responsive, well-mannered funeral team.

Chief Charles Sowles, platoon leader at The Caisson, is impressed with Lonesome, commenting that the horse is quick to learn and smooth to ride.

Before becoming a regular member of the funeral team in December, Lonesome also served the role of an instructor. He was ridden by young soldiers who are themselves training and hoping to earn a spot with the Caisson team.



Lonesome has adjusted well to his new life with the 3rd Army Old Guard Caisson Platoon at Arlington National Cemetery. Photo by Jinx Fox

Lonesome has come a long way in his seven years.

“I see Lonesome as an ambassador to our cause,” said Mark Sant. “He is a wonderful horse, and great representative not only for us, but I’m sure for the Army as well.”

BLM Law Enforcement Steps Up to the Plate

Terry Sauer, Western Montana Zone

BLM law enforcement personnel in Montana have once again responded to the increased security threats to our nation. Investigative Technician Rhonda Howard has been detailed to the Department of Interior national watch office where she is monitoring intelligence sources, inputting data, and preparing briefing documents and daily reports that go to both law enforcement and non-law enforcement sources.

Former Dillon Field Office Ranger Lee Crump was detailed to Grand Cooley Dam where he developed security programs for the protection of hydropower facilities for the Bureau of Reclamation.

Field Office Rangers are coordinating with local law enforcement officials, and increasing vigilance and patrols at critical infrastructure resources on public lands. State Office personnel are working with the Montana Joint Terrorism Task Force, Montana Department of Criminal Investigation and BLM National Law Enforcement Office to coordinate response to threats.

In the months immediately following the 9/11 terrorism attack, BLM Law Enforcement in Montana led the BLM in national security response and is once again stepping up to take a leading role.

A grayscale photograph of the Space Shuttle Columbia being launched from the launch pad. The shuttle is ascending vertically, leaving a large, billowing plume of white smoke and fire behind it. The launch pad structure is visible at the base of the shuttle. The background is a clear sky with some wispy clouds.

BLM Employees Assist with Shuttle Recovery Efforts

Marilyn Krause and Ann Boucher

Incidents. In the mind of a BLM firefighter, dispatch worker or Incident Command Team member, the term is likely to conjure up images of fire camps and Nomex. But even when the incident has nothing to do with fire, BLM employees have the training and experience to handle it efficiently.

The latest example of that is the recovery of the Space Shuttle Columbia. A March 26 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) news release noted that most of the 10,000+ search crew members and support personnel involved in recovery efforts so far are highly trained members of wildland firefighting organizations such as those established by the BLM and other federal agencies.

Montana/Dakotas BLM is well represented in the project. Several of our employees have walked the ground looking for pieces while others handled the logistics required to transport thousands of people to the right places and ensure that they have what they need.

Pete Armstrong of the Butte Field Office recently returned from a 24-day assignment to Corsicana, Texas, as part of a 20-person crew. Their work included gridding fields, usually a square mile, looking for possible evidence and debris. They were assisted by representatives from the EPA and NASA, who entered the coordinates into GPS then bagged and tagged the material. Pete's crew found some of the heat resistant tiles that are meant to protect the shuttle during re-entry.

Armstrong, who has several years of fire experience, felt this assignment differed from fire assignments only by the type of work. The crews worked 12-hour shifts, were housed in large warehouses and were supported by a national caterer and shower facilities.

According to FEMA, a searcher will cover 2.7 to 4.1 acres on a typical day, depending on the terrain. Among other hazards, they may encounter bad weather, ticks, snakes, fire ants, feral hogs, bees and thorns only slightly smaller than the diameter of a pencil.

"I thought it would be like the prairies of eastern Montana," said Elaine Kaufman, who helped coordinate transportation. "But the trees and thorn bushes were so thick in places that the crews had to crawl."

The difficulties were balanced by a few bonuses. Workers had the opportunity to meet NASA personnel and get autographs of an astronaut or two, as well as collect souvenirs like memorial photos of the crew and shuttle lapel pins.

"The NASA people were very supportive," said Kaufman. "Astronauts visited the different camps and gave some presentations, and they let us know how much they appreciated our help."

Other Montana/Dakotas employees who have worked on the recovery are Mick Joplin, Keith Wittenhagen, and Linda Reder, all of the Miles City Field Office; Teri Southworth and Ann Vogt of the Billings Interagency Dispatch Center; Vinita Shea, D.J. Berg, Matt Heelan, and Rob Kephart of the Lewistown Field Office; Beth Klempel of the Glasgow Field Station; Jill Houtzel of the Malta Field Office; and Darrell Pistorius, retiree. Jim Gray and his interagency Type II Incident Team, which includes members from the BLM, BIA and Forest Service, also assisted.

In addition, 16 Montana Indian Fire Fighting crews have been mobilized from the Billings Interagency Dispatch Center so far. One of those crew members from Fort Belknap found the flight data recorder, one of the most critical clues for determining what went wrong.

Bighorn Sheep Return to the Greenhorn Mountains

Kelly Bockting, Dillon Field Office

Anticipation was high as a convoy of trucks drove into the Greenhorn Mountains at dusk, two of them towing livestock trailers transporting 30 bighorn sheep. Biologists and other interested onlookers watched as the doors opened and sheep bolted from the trailers and up the steep terrain, disappearing into their new home range.

Six years of planning efforts paid off when the sheep were released near the Snowcrest Ranch south of Alder on February 20. Jim Roscoe (BLM biologist), Bob Brannon (Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologist), and Mark Petroni (Ennis District Ranger) were key players in developing the memorandum of understanding with the livestock permittee to make sure the re-introduction will be a success.

The environmental assessment for the reintroduction effort calls for releasing 20 to 40 sheep in the area, two years in a row. Supplemental releases may be necessary to establish a sustainable population, depending on survival of the initial releases. Plans call for keeping the population of bighorn sheep at no more than 200.

The round up took place over a three-day period in the Missouri Breaks near Winifred. A crew of net gunners spent hours flying over rugged country to capture three rams, 22 ewes, and five lambs. The net gunners included Australians who'd learned their craft catching red deer in their homeland and nearby New Zealand, and a retired Army helicopter pilot who lived through the Somali conflict.

Dillon Field Office employees Kelly Bockting (wildlife biologist) and Cathy Heine (wildlife technician) participated in the release along with FWP and Forest Service employees as well as ranchers and others interested in the future of bighorn sheep in the Greenhorn Mountains. The Greenhorn Mountains are historic big horn sheep habitat. This event documents the first sheep to inhabit their former range for several decades.



Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologist Bob Brannon, left, and Ron Schott of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest prepare a Missouri Breaks bighorn sheep for transport to its new home in the Greenhorn Mountains near Alder. (Photo by Kaye Suzuki, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest)

Partnership Workshop: A Lesson in Trust

Craig Flentie, Lewistown Field Office

It was a fascinating exercise.

The setting was a Partnership Workshop hosted last winter by the BLM's Lewistown Field Office. Approximately 40 people with widely varying backgrounds and interests were in attendance.

The attendees were divided into three roughly equal groups. The make up of each group was strikingly similar; a couple of environmental representatives, several ranchers, a county commissioner or two, a pilot, a wilderness advocate, a biologist, a planner and a refuge manager (random diversity at its best).

For the sake of this exercise, about eight people in each group were blindfolded; they were the workers. The workers were informed they would have to accomplish a somewhat complicated task without their sight and little time for planning. The remaining group members could see, but they could not talk or in any way guide the workers; they were the guardians. The guardians were to keep the workers from walking into tables or door jams as they moved about the conference room and completed their task.

The instructors then informed each group of a few ground rules. At the beginning of this exercise, each group would have to move to the back of the conference room, determine on their own what their task was, finish the task and return to their table.



In their next breath, the instructors told the groups to begin. You could almost see the blank looks through the blindfolds! At this point the exercise in organization, trust and working together began to get interesting.

The workers in group 1 gathered and soon lined up in a somewhat single file, each with their right hand on the shoulder of the person in front of them and started making their way to the back of the room.

The workers in group 2 scattered like marbles thrown on a pool table. Each independent thinker in this group took off on his or her own and there was little the guardians could do to keep them together.

Each worker in group 3 gathered around their table and discussed their charge, then each of them grabbed a belt loop of the person in front of him or her and started making good

progress toward the back of the room.

Groups 1 and 3 were able to find their task (which had been left on the floor for them to locate with their feet). They were able to lift their task, identify what it was by touch, then by instinct they knew what they had to do. These two groups were sharing information, leadership and ability.

The workers in group 2 had not yet located the back of the room or each other again.

Meanwhile in the back of the room, groups 1 and 3 were doing very well. With a few exceptions all of these workers recognized the task they had to accomplish. They were also very good with sharing information with their group peers who did not yet grasp what their task was. People who began the workshop suspicious of those across the table were

now working together, laughing together, and leading together.

Within a reasonable time, groups 1 and 3 were able to accomplish their task and start back toward the table they started from. Again these groups organized themselves for the return trip and did well.

Upon reaching their table again, these workers removed their blindfolds and it was obvious they were now sharing a sense of accomplishment.

It was about now that group 2 had found its way to the back of the room and several of them had kicked an object on the floor. However, they still were not working together well enough to identify what their task was. For the sake of time,

the instructors advised several workers in group 2 that they could remove their blindfolds. With several workers now able to see their situation (and with a



little talking) group 2 began making progress.

The lesson was clear. A group of diverse people can accomplish a complicated task by working together and placing a little initial trust in each other. When this exercise was over, the participants seemed to share the impression that their initial trust had become earned trust.

SPECIAL NOTE: The instructors did not want this task discussed in detail since they will use it again at future workshops. If you've attended this or other similar workshops, such as the one held in Miles City April 8-10, and are aware of what this task is, please keep it to yourself. — Thanks

Building Partnerships...Encouraging Leadership

Gayla Wortman, Administrator

(This article appeared in the January 2003 issue of the Conservation Chronicle, a newsletter of the Cascade County Conservation District. Reprinted with permission.)

I recently had the great privilege to attend a BLM-sponsored seminar focused on building partnerships and encouraging leadership. The seminar was conducted by staff from the National Training Center in Phoenix. It was very focused and intense, but worth every minute.

Some of the highlights of the content of the class included learning how to identify and work in a community, how to build trust in the community, and how to succeed as a community. We learned that it is difficult to build trust, but it must be achieved and then nurtured. In a collaborative process, the players must have compassion for one another, they have to learn how to really listen, as well as to talk, and the social culture has to be considered.

There are three main concepts to get a community involved in a collaborative process. First, one must understand and learn to use the "information networks, places like the coffee

shop and the Mint Cafe. Second, we have to learn the "human geography," or the places people do their day-to-day activities (church, school, court house). Finally we have to identify the citizen issues – those things that will give the citizens ownership.

Perhaps the most inspiring section of the seminar, for me at least, was the part on "transformational leadership." Transformation leaders are people who are trying to initiate a change. They have a vision of the future – they are not sure what it looks like, but they know it is better than it is now. They build the bridge as the walk across it.

Leaders have to be willing to take risks and break the rules to achieve a goal. They cannot be afraid to expose conflicts in order to address the real issues. Leaders have to be willing to face personal "integrity gaps," or gaps between values and actions. True leaders recognize the gaps and

strive to close them. Good leaders believe in the power of people to initiate change and show great compassion and respect for others. They are driven by a higher moral calling – they cannot not do it. We learned that leaders see beyond what is already manifest to what could be. They create strong visual images through stories, symbols and metaphors. They create environments that empower others, and they relinquish control to empower others.

During the course of the seminar, I was assigned to work with a group of individuals of different ages, varying careers, and professional expertise. It was, by all definitions, a “diversified

group.” One of our final assignments was to tell a story, from the land’s point of view, that would explain the changes to the land and the relationships with people over about a 10-year period. For some odd reason (okay, I might have volunteered) I was the story-teller, while the rest of the group began listing ideas, values, issues, concerns, and interests. By the time we were finished “collaborating,” I only had about 10 minutes in which to write the story. I did my best, but I felt it was unfinished and resonating with the need to be completed. Therefore, to honor my work group, I have finished the story I began in the early part of December, and offer it here. Enjoy.

This is My Apron

I am the land, and this, the great Missouri River, is my apron. Once, as far as the eye could see, all was green and growing. Great herds of bison, elk, and deer ranged far and wide. The grass waved proudly in the prairie breeze and sheltered the burrowing owl and the sage grouse. The tiny meadowlark sang the morning sun over the gumbo fold. All lived in harmony in my apron. It was a good place.

Then the explorers came, and the traders, and the sheep herders, and the cowboys, and the homesteaders, and the railroad, and the tourists, and the government. I withstood it all with proud indifference and resilience, but then my courage failed. My apron became ragged and dirty. The bison disappeared, the grass shriveled up and blew away. Once beautiful ecosystems were destroyed. The homesteaders droughted out and were forced to leave. The ranchers lost money and schools closed. Towns died. I cried out in shame for my malady and my inability to sustain my people. My apron became empty.

Finally, someone heard my strangled plea for help. People began to talk to each other – and to listen. They reached out to each other across boundaries, both real and imagined, and began to believe they could make a difference.

My people worked hard, hand in hand with the government, and others that once they saw as enemies. Weeds that had taken the place of the bunch grass were eliminated and native grasses came back. Great and elegant cottonwood trees once again embroider the edges of my apron. Fatted cattle lived in harmony with great herds of deer and elk. My gateway communities have schools, hospitals, hotels and restaurants.

I am happy to once again welcome visitors because I can support my people. I can support traditional agriculture and still provide a playground for those who visit. I am proud of what my people were able to do during a difficult time. My apron is full.



Sage-Grouse Hard to Follow

Louise Bruce and Jim Roscoe, Dillon Field Office

Greater sage-grouse conservation has become a major issue in the western U.S. with significant losses of habitat and population declines in some areas within the range of these birds. In an effort to acquire local information on sage-grouse movements and preferred habitat in southwest Montana, BLM wildlife biologist Jim Roscoe has headed up a cooperative project using radio telemetry to follow sage-grouse since 1998.

Night spotlighting has been the primary tool used to capture sage-grouse because the birds cannot be baited into traps as waterfowl and pheasants can. Attempts to initiate a graduate level project in the area have been hampered by the inability to capture very many hen sage-grouse. In 2003, two technicians from Montana State University and BLM/Forest Service biologists used a pair of walk-in traps similar to those that have been successful in eastern Montana. Getting these traps set up in the right places and finding cooperative birds has been difficult so far, and no birds have been captured.

BLM crews have done a limited amount of spotlighting, considerably less than in past years, and have caught and radio-collared four male sage-grouse. Information gained by following these radio-equipped birds has identified localized preferred habitats and confirmed

movements between leks in southwestern Montana and both summer and winter ranges in southeast Idaho. We will continue to monitor the birds throughout the summer and fall.



Biologist Jim Roscoe cradles a sage-grouse trapped in an ongoing monitoring study.
Photo by Brian Hockett



They proceeded on . . .

Spring 1803

Lewis, now picked as commander, is sent to Philadelphia for instruction in botany, zoology, celestial navigation, and medicine from the nation's leading scientists. He also begins buying supplies to outfit the expedition.

Lewis writes to former army comrade, William Clark, inviting him to share command of expedition. Clark writes to accept.



(source: www.PBS.org)

Lewistown Field Office Recognized for Excellence in Riparian Management

Craig Flentie, Lewistown Field Office

At times, managing public resources feels a little like being on a tread mill; there's no end to the effort and getting anywhere seems nearly impossible.

However, the remarkable riparian regeneration obvious at some public land sites along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River is proving to be an exception to this maxim.

In fact, the regeneration shown at some of these sites is so significant that the riparian program spearheaded by the BLM's Lewistown Field Office has been recognized with the 2003 Award of Excellence in Riparian Management from the American Fisheries Society.

"Many of our Missouri River riparian sites have proven they can recover in a year or two. However, defining the problem or problems and finding suitable solutions can take considerably longer," offered Joe Frazier, a BLM hydrologist and riparian program lead in the Lewistown Field Office.

In 1988, the Bureau of Land Management contracted a riparian inventory of public lands along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. The dismal results confirmed what many suspected. There was almost no riparian regeneration (cottonwood trees, willow trees, healthy understory) occurring on these public lands.

The 15 years since have been marked with all the twists and turns common to public resource management.

Additional inventory and analysis identified a variety of problems limiting the amount of riparian regeneration. Regulated flows controlled by upstream dams and hot season livestock grazing (July, August and September) were found to be major impacts to the regeneration of woody species. Ice flows, beaver and other wildlife can also take a toll on young starts.

Resolving issues on public land, through



Four years can make a world of difference. In 1999, the BLM constructed a 12-mile long fence on this riparian site to create two separate pastures. One pasture is grazed in the spring (May 1 to June 15) for two consecutive years while the second pasture is rested. Then the pasture use is reversed for two years. (photos by Joe Frazier)

site-specific watershed planning, is a team effort that involves significant public input. Drafting possible solutions was the topic of numerous watershed team meetings, public meetings (some smooth, some a little rough) and partnerships with other agencies, ranchers and interested individuals. Fencing to better manage livestock, changing the grazing season of use, constructing riparian exclosures, building off-site water sources, and resting riparian pastures were the mechanisms designed to enhance riparian regeneration. It should be mentioned that none of the mechanisms used to increase riparian regeneration reduced the number of livestock grazing animal unit months available to any permittee.

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It's also important to note that a number of partners have been involved throughout this process. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Pennsylvania Power and Light, the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, American Rivers, county conservation districts, private landowners, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program have (or will be) involved with finding and implementing solutions to the riparian puzzle.

After implementing these mechanisms, some riparian areas have responded with amazing on-the-ground increases in the number of cottonwoods, willows and other understory plants in a short time (1-3 years). The increased presence of these plants also improves soil cover and streambank protection which benefits the entire system.

All of the public land riparian sites selected for additional livestock management have responded with some level of success. However, the riparian program feels strongly that additional grazing management alone will not maintain the current number of acres of mature cottonwood and willow stands on public lands along the Upper Missouri. At some point, negotiations with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers are needed to restore flood flows to create sites suitable for riparian habitat.

"The LFO has taken the approach that it must manage for healthy riparian areas if we're to see significant riparian restoration. Not every area will respond, but history shows that no effort will produce little or no success," Frazier commented.

"We're extremely pleased that Joe and our riparian program have been recognized with this award. It confirms their efforts on behalf of all our stakeholders. Less than one percent of the acreage we manage has riparian potential, yet it can provide so much for so many, so it does require our best effort," added Chuck Otto, Associate Lewistown Field Manager for Renewable Resources.

Joe Frazier will be traveling to San Diego to accept this award from the American Fisheries Society on April 16. The presentation will be part of the American Fisheries Society annual meeting.

Miles City Field Office Donates Computers

Mark E. Jacobsen, Miles City Field Office

The students of the Custer County School District received a hardware boost from the Miles City Field Office March 28 as the last 18 complete computers were loaded for transport aboard a school district truck.

The total donation of 44 complete computer set-ups, four laptop computers and four printers represented \$72,534 in total acquisition costs by the Miles City Field Office, who turned the last units over to district representatives on the 28th.

School beneficiaries included the students and teachers of Head Start, Kinsey School, Washington Middle School and Custer County District High School.

The donation was the result of Executive Order 12999, or "Educational Technology: Ensuring Opportunity for All Children in the Next Century," which was enacted to provide modern computers to classrooms.

The Executive Order encourages Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureaus and Offices to transfer their excess computer equipment that is not reutilized within the DOI directly to schools and other nonprofit educational organizations.

"We're just really pleased to get them," said Ron Stanton, technology coordinator for the Unified School District, Miles City.

The BLM computers, many of them Pentium II's and III's will be upgrading the current fleet of older Pentium versions and increasing the number of available modules for student labs and teacher workstations, said Stanton. The current stocks of six to eight year-old systems are long over due for replacing.

"They're just at the very end of their use and life cycle and we are out of budget to replace any of these," said Stanton. "This is just wonderful getting this type of stuff."

Stanton said the donated computers will be upgraded to Windows XP operating systems, networked and plugged into the Internet, to provide a tremendous service for area students.

According to Anna Rogers, BLM computer assistant and Student Career and Education Program participant, the excess computers were the result of regular 3-year upgrades that the BLM conducts to keep pace with technological improvements in computer systems.

Miles City Staffers Judge Science Fair

Mark E. Jacobsen, Miles City FO

Over 70 students in grades five through eight gathered for this year's Rural School Science Fair hosted February 21 by Sacred Heart School in Miles City.

Three Miles City Field Office staffers, who joined ranks with 20 other employees from various agencies to provide judging for the event, represented the BLM.

First time science fair judge, Brenda Witkowski, BLM Natural Resource Weed Specialist, found her involvement reminiscent of times past.

"I remember when I was in the fifth grade and brought one (entry) to this exact same science fair," said Witkowski. "It's kind of cool to come back and to be able to judge these kids."

"It's impressive, the things they come up with and how much they learn about it," said Witkowski.

The projects were separated into research or experiment categories for judging. Students were graded on creativity, scientific thought, thoroughness and comprehension for a maximum of 100 points. The judges were encouraged to quiz the students and grade them by the criteria to directly reflect the student's efforts.

BLM Archaeologist Doug Melton found the scope and diversity of the projects to belie what one might expect of pint-sized participants.

"I was amazed at the diversity of the experiments and the research that went on," said



BLM Archaeologist Doug Melton listens to Garrett Larson, 14, a Kinsey School eighth grader give his dissertation on coal bed methane water and fish. (Photo by Mark Jacobsen)

Melton.

The projects were a veritable "Dexter's Laboratory," with entries ranging from topographic map-making, the effects of coal bed methane water on fish and Newton's Second Law of Physics, to the best ways to bleach animal skulls and the reactions of earth worms to electric shock.

"It's always good to see what the kids are working on and their ideas," said BLM Wildlife Biologist Kent Undlin.

Undlin lent his talents as a BLM science fair judge each year he was living in Elko, Nevada, his previous residence. When asked whether he would do it again, his answer was instantaneous.

"In a second," said Undlin.

Sacred Heart School was chosen for its centralized location to be the host of the science fair which is only for the rural schools of Custer County. At the program's inception, primarily local volunteers did the judging; however, their qualifications were generally from backgrounds other than science.

Later, a move was made towards soliciting the local federal agencies for judges, bringing volunteers who had extensive backgrounds in the sciences. The result was a marked increase in the overall quality of the judging and the fair experience for the students.

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“Not only were they able to give us better quality in judging the projects, they were able to do so much better when they were talking to the kids,” said Principle Bart Freese, Sacred Heart School science fair coordinator. “If the student has something in their project that’s wrong, quite often one of these scientists can sit there and help straighten them out and tell them what they did wrong.”

“We are so pleased to be able to have the support of the different government agencies at this science fair,” said Freese. “We hope that we can still use them year after year because the science fair wouldn’t be anywhere near as good without that professionalism.”



Kinsey School student Clay Bott, 14, gives the fine points of his experiment on taste and hearing to BLM Wildlife Biologist Kent Undlin. (Photo by Mark Jacobsen)



BLM Natural Resource Weed Specialist Brenda Witkowski takes a closer look as 12-year-old Kircher School student Wacey Stuart, talks about “mountain measuring.” (Photo by Mark Jacobsen)



Dale Enger

Let's say that you're out hiking and you break your leg. Or you're on a fire crew and you need instructions on where to go next. Or maybe your spouse went hunting and didn't return when planned. What do you do?

It was for situations such as these that the BLM joined with other local, state and federal agencies to develop a radio site network. The network is a critical lifeline for BLM field offices, fire staffs and search and rescue operations in remote areas.

The BLM owns or leases 51 radio communications sites, and is required to upgrade 45 of them with narrow band radio equipment by fiscal year 2005. The upgrades will greatly enhance equipment capabilities and the structures that house them.

Dale Enger was hired as a term employee in June 2001 to manage the project.

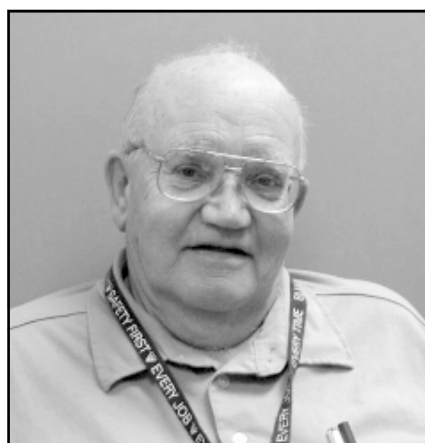
"Dale is in charge of all phases of the work including the planning, design, contract preparation, contract administration and approval of the contract work," said Greg Bergum, Dale's supervisor. "He has traveled to all reaches of Montana and parts of South Dakota and has done an outstanding job of keeping everything in order."

In addition, the radio towers are getting some fall protection equipment to ensure the safety of BLM employees and contractors who will climb them.

"The old towers didn't really have any safety features," Dale said. "Now you wear a harness attached to a cable that will stop a fall within about 4 feet."

Using the Billings-based architectural and engineering firm HKM to assist in the survey and design of the sites, radio towers and buildings, Dale has nearly completed ten sites that were reconstructed during fiscal year 2002. He expects to complete eight more this year and up to 16 in fiscal year 2004.

After earning an engineering degree from Montana State University in Bozeman, Dale



worked for Boeing for 23 years. He later worked for a couple of architectural and engineering firms, and then the Department of Defense at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. He retired from the DOD in 1995 and moved back to Billings.

"I've been doing this sort of thing most of my life," Dale said. "So when I saw the ad for this job in the paper, I thought it sounded pretty good. I can only do so much golfing. I like to keep busy and be productive."

Dale served in the U.S. Army in Korea during the Korean War. He and his wife, Charlene, have 2 sons and 3 grandchildren. *(Ann Boucher, Montana State Office)*

Third Yellowstone River Floater's Guide Now Available

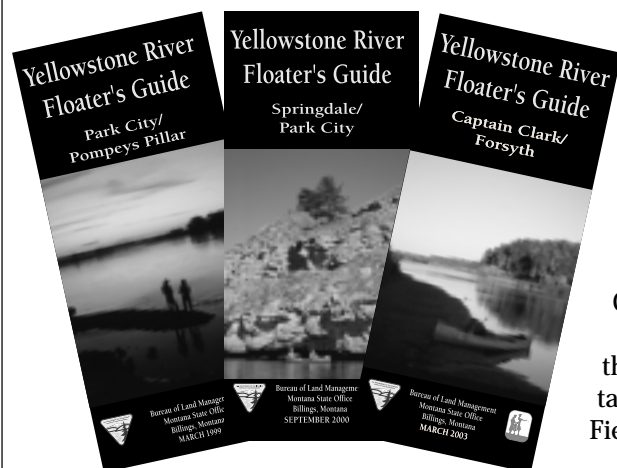
The newest Yellowstone River Floater's Guide is now available. The third in a series, this guide details the stretch of river between the Captain Clark fishing access and Forsyth.

Each of the three available guides highlights historical points, identifies hazards, and shows federal, state and private land ownership along an 80-mile segment of the Yellowstone River. They also provide information about safety and river etiquette.

David Squires, natural resource advisor from the Miles City Field Office, says he has been seeing more requests for floating information on the Yellowstone River. He expects river use to increase significantly in conjunction with the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The BLM worked with the State of Montana, local chambers of commerce, the Lower Yellowstone River Bicentennial Commission, and other individuals to produce the guides.

Three more Yellowstone River guides are planned. The three completed ones are available for \$4 each from the Montana State Office in Billings (406-896-5004) or the Miles City Field Office (406-233-2810).





Calling BLM Retirees

Want to stay in touch? The BLM Retirees Association meets on the first Tuesday of odd-numbered months at Elmer's Pancake and Steak House, 2455 Central Avenue in Billings. Each meeting starts at 11:30 a.m. and features a short program.

If you would like to receive email notifications of these meetings and other office functions, please send your address to Cynthia Embretson at ceatsage@wtp.net, or call her at 252-1367.

Please also help us keep our Quarterly Steward mailing list current by contacting Ann Boucher of the External Affairs staff at 406-896-5011 with address changes.

Retired from Montana/Dakotas BLM since January 1, 2003:

W. Delon Potter — 33 years
Supervisory Land Use Specialist, Missoula Field Office

Lawrence H. Newman — 38 years
Rangeland Management Specialist, Missoula Field Office

Rosetta Deines — 13 years
Secretary (Office Automation), Montana State Office

Alice H. Slagowski — 45 years
Computer Specialist, Montana State Office

Joanne E. Mosbaugh — 10 years
Staff Support Assistant, Billings Field Office

Linda L. Koch — 29 years
Supervisory Property Management Specialist, Montana State Office

Janet F. Singer — 37 years
Administrative Officer, Montana State Office

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